

**ISSUE: Social Justice, Judiciary Committee**

Dear Members of the Judiciary Committee,

My name is Ellen Kleckner and I am from New London. I oppose SB 1085 that would legalize marijuana for "recreation".

I am concerned about this bill because it will detrimentally impact social justice in New London. The root causes that lead to unjust treatment of disadvantaged people in our criminal justice system are systemic, unjust policies and laws and racism.

The marijuana industry would have you believe that legalizing marijuana will significantly decrease arrests for people of color. This is FALSE.

In Denver African American arrests in 2017 remain unchanged since 2012 and Hispanic and Asian arrests are up during the same period (Colorado Department of Public Safety, 2018).

African Americans are twice as likely to be arrested for marijuana in CO and WA, both states that have fully legalized marijuana use (Center on Juvenile and Criminal Justice, 2016).

CO's marijuana arrest rate for African Americans was nearly double that of Caucasians in 2017 (CO Department of Public Safety, 2018).

Pot Shops are dense in poor neighborhoods of color in Denver (Denver Post, 2016). In states that have legalized marijuana, minority youth are showing much larger increases in use of marijuana than their Caucasian peers. (Johnson, RM et al. Prevention Science, 2018). Would that be different in CT?

Please listen very critically to the arguments from marijuana legalization proponents on the issue of social justice.

Please vote NO on SB 1085.

Sincerely,

Ellen Kleckner

New London